

## Testimony in Support of HB 666

### Research Facilities and Testing Facilities that Use Animals – Prohibitions and Adoption Requirements (Animal Modernization & Best Practices Act 2026)

Good afternoon, Chair Korman, and honorable members of the Environment and Transportation Committee. Thank you for this opportunity to present **HB 666, Animal Modernization and Best Practices Act 2026**.

Maryland should be proud of its work on two fronts: to invest in its biotech industries and research institutions as well as create strong animal welfare protections. Specifically, I am referencing the Center for Alternatives to Animal Testing at JHU and the emerging biotech center at UMD. HB 666 will ensure that Maryland stays a leader of new, non-animal testing methods. We are already seeing the impact that human-relevant technologies have on advancing human health, discovering cutting-edge solutions that animal testing could never have revealed.

In Maryland specifically, there are a couple of projects that use organ chip approaches. One of these looks at the gut-brain axis, using human cells to make brain and gut organ chips, to better understand neurodegenerative diseases. These chips model different regions of the kidney for disease and drug screening. Johns Hopkins also has projects examining cardiac function. Heart and nerve cell projects are used to better understand cardiac diseases and cancer screening.

Testing on animals is not even necessarily accurate - 90% of drugs found safe on animals ultimately fail in human trials. Investing in these emerging technologies will take Maryland to the next level in our research, our biotech, and our lifesaving interventions.

Maryland has already established that we want to be a humane state. In 2021 this legislature passed a law ending the testing of new cosmetics on animals, joining four other states in a national effort to ban cosmetic testing. In 2022, nearly 4,000 beagles were rescued from a testing facility in Cumberland, Virginia, some of whom were placed in care and rehabilitation centers in Maryland. While those 4,000 dogs were able to start new lives in loving homes, still, more than 60,000 dogs are used in laboratory testing each year across the country, not to mention countless other animals.

Why stop halfway on being humane? This legislation doesn't halt research. It improves it. It ensures that when we have reliable alternatives, we use tools that better serve humans and animals. Maryland has demonstrated a willingness to lead in biotechnology and humane policy. For the sake of ethical responsibility, scientific advancement, and our position at the forefront of innovation, I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 666. Thank you for your time and consideration.